A RESOLUTION OF THIS CASE,

VIZ.

Whether it be Lawful to ſeparate from the Publick Worſhip of God in the *PAROCHIAL Aſſemblies* of *England*, upon that New Pretence, which ſome Men make, Of the Caſe being much Altered now from what it was, when the *Puritans* wrote againſt the *Brownifts* and the *Presbyterians* againſt the *Independent*.

LONDON,

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1683.

The more Modern Objections, which are now pretended by our *Diſſenters*, to alter the Caſe, are theſe which follow; being Particularly anſwer'd, (moſtly out of the *Nonconforming Miniſters* own Writings) in theſe Papers.

1. *IT look's more like compliance with Carnal Intereſt than Conſcience, for Men to hold Communion with Pariſh-Aſſemblies at this time.*

2. *There are many more Corruptions and Impoſitions in the Church now, which hinder our Communion with it.*

3. *I could go to the Publick Aſſemblies if I were left to my own Liberty of Conſcience, but I cannot do it being Compell'd.*

4. *We have now more Experience and Light than was formerly, to direct us.*

5. *If we ſhould now join in Communion with the Church of* England, *we ſhould ſeem guilty of* Apoſtacy, *in building up the things we our ſelves once deſtroyed.*

6. *We are entered now into a Solemn League and Covenant to endeavour greater Reformation in the Church.*

7. *If I comply with the Liturgy at this Time, I ſhould gratifie the* Papiſts, *and weaken the* Proteſtant *Intereſt.*

8. *I cannot hold Communion with Railers and Perſecutors, and ſuch Scandalous Perſons, as are moſt, Miniſters and People in the Publick Aſſemblies now adays:*

9. *The way of Preaching is now quite altered, and the Doctrines that are generally taught are very corrupt; either meer Morality or else thorow-paced* Arminianism *and contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of* England.

10. *Our* Nonconforming *Ministers themselves (who doubtless well know what they do) will not go to Church now, whereas formerly they did.*

11. *If we should not attend the Ministry of the* Nonconformists *still, They must starve for want of Maintenance, they being Poor and Indigent, having lost their Livings.*

12. *There have been so many Books written of late in Defence of* Nonconformity, *that I cannot be satisfy'd, but still remain in Doubt, Whether it be lawful to hold Communion with the* Parochial Assemblies: *I vehemently suspect it to be sinful, and* whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, *and therefore there's an end of the Controversy.*

A RESOLUTION OF THIS CASE, &c.

PEACE and Unity, as they are the great design of the *Christian Doctrine*, so is the want of them no where more fatal, and more to be lamented than in the *Christian Church*. Our later Ages have sufficiently demonstrated the sad effects of our Dissentions; I wish the sense of them might unite all Christians; but especially such of us, as separate upon *small pretences*, if not *less Reason*. For 'tis Pitty that any [little] matter should be the occasion of so great an Evil amongst such. 'Tis enough sad, that *Protestants* (after all their peaceable Endeavours) cannot gain *Unity* with others: 'Tis too much so, that any Breach should be maintain'd and widen'd among themselves. Here, Friends ought not sure to fall out with, and separate from one another upon light occasions; which, to be sure, can effectually advantage none but their Enemies, and afflict none more than themselves.

The sence of this hath, not only here of late forc't many seasonable Persuasives from several of our Eminent *London-Ministers of the Church of* England, (in those excellent *Resolutions of* many *Cases of Conscience*) tending

tending to Unite us; but likewiſe hath ever rendred ſeparation from the Publick Worſhip of God in the *Parochial* Aſſemblies, ſo unbeſeeming, ſo unnatural even to the Old Nonconforming Divines themſelves, That there is nothing can be more evident to the Intelligent part of Mankind who have read Men and Books, than that themſelves have Writ ſtrenuouſly againſt it (as hath been ſufficiently already ſhew'n in that late excellent Piece, called, *The Caſe of Lay-Communion, juſtified from the Teſtimony of above an hundred* Nonconformiſts) and in their own Writings have anſwered all the Objections that are uſually made. And therefore our preſent Separatiſts, to vindicate themſelves in this Point, and that they may not be thought Apoſtates from their Principles, have endeavoured to find out a vaſt Difference between the ſtate of the Pariſh Churches now, and what they were in thoſe days.

The Deſign of this Paper is (with the greateſt Candour and Charity) to help them likewiſe off this Rock, againſt which they ſeem ſo willing to Ship-wrack the Peace and Unity of the Church, and to conſider thoſe Differences which are pretended, and to anſwer them (for their ſtronger Convincement) moſtly out of their own Writings (not medling with any that have been collected into that late Piece above-named) againſt that *New Sett of Objections*, lately ſtarted up; when the old one's like ſo many lying Oracles are ſtruck Dumb by the force of Ancient and Modern Arguments of thoſe ſeveral eminent *Divines in* London.

1. Obj. Firſt of all, *They now Object and tell us, That it looks more like Compliance with Carnal Intereſt than Conſcience for Men to hold Communion with Pariſh-Aſſemblies at this time.*

Anſw. An Objection than which none is more common (amongſt the Vulgar of them eſpecially) when Communion

nion is urged. But why must a Regular Obedience to Laws be called a Compliance with Carnal Interest? Why may it not be more Charitably presumed that the Reason why some Men alter their former Principles and Practices, is, because they have now taken more pains than ordinary in studying, reading, and discoursing the Point of *Lay-Communion*, and so discover themselves to have been in the wrong all this while, having been imposed upon by the subtle Insinuations of their Guides, whose wrested Interpretations of Scripture and Misapplications of Texts have led them into Paths of Separation in order to the promoting a Private Interest. No one Principle hath proved a greater friend to Separation than Men's Pride, in thinking it a Disgrace to change their Minds tho' upon the clearest Convictions and most apparent Reason. Hath it not been the practice of the Wisest Men that ever were, to alter their Judgments upon more mature and solid thoughts? Must a Man always be of this Mind because he once was so? St. *Austin* himself wrote his Retractions. Days teach Knowledge, and every Man is, or ought to be, Wiser as he is Older, and more experienced. We ought not, therefore, to censure any Man, as guided by Carnal Interest, when he can give a better Reason for his Action in attending the Publick Worship of God in the *Parochial Assemblies*, than we who Censure him can give against it; and perhaps he hath taken ten times the pains rightly to inform his Understanding, than one that scruples it hath done. So that what one Man may think a Sin to do, he may think it a Sin to forbear. The uncharitable Censorious Person hath lost half the Religion of a Christian; and hath exchanged one of the fairest Graces of a Saint, for one of the Blackest Characters of a Devil.

By

By the ſame Rule that I cenſure another Man for differing from me, he may cenſure me for differing from him; and then if Almighty God ſhould Damn us all, for ſuch things which ſtraight-laced, narrow-ſoul'd Chriſtians Damn one another for, very few would be ſaved. It's better to give an account to a Merciful God for too much Charity, than for too great Cenſoriouſneſs.

The Reverend Mr. *How* methinks (would they conſider him) hath ſpoken enough to convince them of this fault, and to anſwer this their Objection, *in his Sermon at the Morning Exerciſe, in that laſt Volume lately publiſhed.*

" This Objection (ſays he) ſmells ſtrong in a very " high Degree of Uncharitableneſs, very unbecoming " a true Chriſtian temper; which would make us ab- " ſtain from Cenſuring of one another as Inſincere, " upon the account of Religious Differences. " Where Love remains and bears rule, it cannot be " that they, who are unſatisfied with the way of " Worſhip that Generally obtains, ſhould cenſure " them that are ſatisfied, as if they were Inſincere, " meerly becauſe of this Difference.

" Why ſhould we think that nothing but corrupt " Inclinations muſt govern ſome Chriſtians, who think " it their Duty to attend the Publick Forms, there- " by to teſtify their Union with other ſincere Chri- " ſtians under thoſe Forms, eſpecially in a time when " the Conteſt is ſo high in the World, between them " who profeſs the Subſtance of reformed Chriſtianity, " and them that have ſo much deformed it? Why " may not ſome Chriſtians think it becomes them at " any time to expreſs their Unconfinedneſs to a Par- " ty, and to uſe that Chriſtian Liberty, which they " think ſhould not be judged by another Man's Con-

" ſci-

" ſcience, which yet they would have regard unto,
" were there not greater reaſons to prepondе-
" rate?

" True Chriſtian Love, and Compaſſion of Humane
" frailty, and an humble ſence of a man's own weak-
" neſs ſhould oblige him to think, that Conſcience
" towards God may have a greater Hand in guiding
" Men the different ways they take, than is common-
" ly thought. We ought to conſider that tho' ſuch
" and ſuch reaſons ſeem not weighty to us, they
" may to ſome others, who are as much affraid of
" ſinning againſt God as we; and perhaps their Un-
" derſtandings are as good in other matters as ours.
" Men's Apprehenſions are of a different ſize, and con-
" ſequently their Conſciencious Determinations:
" And they have various reliſhes of things which we
" ought to conſider with Equanimity to make us re-
" frain hard Cenſures. The Martyrs in Queen *Mary's*
" Days found great Spiritual refreſhing by the Com-
" mon Prayer: And ſo ſome in our Days profeſs
" that their Hearts have been much warmed, and
" their Affections rais'd by it. It would be uncha-
" ritable, more to ſuſpect their ſincerity than our
" own. It's a difficult thing to ſit in Judgment up-
" on another Man; eſpecially in a matter of ſo high
" a nature as the Poſture of his heart towards God.
" If ſome have more Latitude than I, and think
" what they may do in preſent Circumſtances; ſo far
" as they may, they muſt. Would it not be the
" Dictate of Love, patiently to admit it, eſpecially
" when it comes to ſuffering? Thus he.

And what can be more cloſe, then ſuch reaſoning, to their Objection? And not much behind him is *Mr. Gifford*, the old *Nonconformiſt*, who was ſo far from looking upon Communion with the Church,

as a meer compliance with Carnal Interest, that he tells you "Some Separatists are proceeded so far, that "they will not hear the Prayers of the Book; which "I take to be a greater Sin than many do suppose. "Nay, says he, some are gone so far as to fall into a "Damnable Schism, and yet take themselves for the "most godly Christians. See his Preface to his second Treatise against the Donatist's of *England* (for so he calls the Separatist'.)

Thus you see what sence your own Leaders profess, concerning this first Objection, which is fondly suffer'd to retain you from our Publick Assemblies. It is, certainly, a very Antichristian temper, and hath in it a very high Degree of Phanaticism, to censure Men for their Obedience to the Laws of God and the King. I'me sure it's contrary to an Apostolical Cannon, *for him that eateth not, to Judg him that eateth: As well as for him that eateth, to Judg him that eateth not.* Rom. 14. 3.

But (still Object our Lay-Separatists) *The case is now much altered, by the many corrupt Impositions, and therefore we cannot Communicate with your Parochial Assemblies.*

To this I answer, The moderate *Nonconformists* themselves do (as they cannot, indeed, in Reason, do otherwise) with one consent declare, that Separation from the Publick Worship of God, when it is meerly upon the account of some Corruptions and Defects in the Circumstantial Modes of Administration, where the Substance of Religion is sound and good (maintaining neither Heresy in Doctrine, nor Idolatry in Worship) is to be absolutely condemned. But the Parish Churches of *England*, where the Substance of Religion is sound and good, are (confessedly) true Churches of Christ; *Erg:* They are not to be separated

rated from, upon this pretence, that there are ſome ſuppoſed Corruptions and Defects in the Circumſtantial Modes of Adminiſtration. Where the Ground is ſound and good, we may ſafely venture to raiſe our Building, the Quagmires ſhould be round about us. 'Shall men (*ſays Mr. Ben. Bruning, in his Sermon 'preach'd at Ipſwitch, at the Election of Parliament 'Men*, 1660) chop off the Head of Religion it ſelf, 'only becauſe they find a Bauble upon its Sleeve? 'Nothing can juſtify Separation from the Church, 'but that Churches Apoſtacy into down right Idola-'try or ſome Damnable Hereſie. By all that I can 'learn from my Bible, we can be aſſured of nothing 'elſe: for Perſons willingly to ſeparate and refuſe 'Communion with a Church, ſo long as God vouch-'ſafe's Communion; how can this be juſtifyed, or 'how will it be anſwered? I know not. Thoſe Words, 2 Cor. 6. '*come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate*, have 17. 'been much abuſed for the encouragement of Separa-'tion from the Publick Aſſemblies of *England*. For 'who is it, but ſuch as are forlornly void of all Chri-'ſtian Charity, that dare ſay concerning the hundred 'Years paſt, that the Aſſemblies of the Church of '*England* have had nothing of the Lord's gracious 'preſence with them? Or that Ordinances have been 'empty things? He that affirms this, bears falſe wit-'neſs againſt thouſands of glorifyed Saints in Heaven, 'and Gracious Souls on Earth, who have found to 'their everlaſting comfort the Preſence of God in his 'Ordinances among us. Suppoſe there are Miſcar-'riages in the Management of God's Worſhip and 'Ordinances amongſt us, yet if they be not ſuch as 'drive God away, I ſee no reaſon they have to drive 'us away. If the Lord had ever intended to ſend 'any going whilſt he afforded his own preſence,

'[*same*] *from among them* would be improper Lan-
'guage in such a case; It must have been [*go*] *from*
'*among them*, not *come*. Suppose our Lot be cast in
'a Church that hath Corruptions and Miscarrages
'whilst it holds the Substantials of true Doctrine and
'Worship; do any think in this Case, they cannot
'hold Communion with such a Church without being
'accessory to its Miscarriages, and incurring the guilt
'of its Corruptions? I must profess I am clearly of a-
'nother Opinion and Judgment, and am confirmed
'in it from the Practice of our Lord and Master:
'Who was a member of the *Jewish* Church, whilst
'it was corrupt in Doctrine, Worship and Conver-
'sation. 'Tis true, he was far from owning its Cor-
'ruptions: He lamented and reproved them, and la-
'boured a Redress; but still held Communion with
'it as a Member of it. He sharply reproves the *seven*
'*Churches* for what was amiss; and severely threatens
'them, if they amend not. But all this while, there
'is not the least blame laid upon any Member of those
'Churches, for not withdrawing or suspending their
'Communion. Did their Communion with *the Church*
'*of Sardis* make them accessory to the defilements of
'it? How then could our Saviour have truly said of
Rev. 3, 4. 'them, that they *had not defiled their Garments*?
'Would any man take it well to have a Plague-mark
'clapt upon his Door because of some Uncleanness in
'his House? This is the usage that Christ meets with-
'al, when any separate from a Church as Antichristi-
'an upon any Grounds short of gross Apostacy. Let
'all the World see that Principles of Loyalty, Lega-
'lity and Civil Order, are no Inconsistencies with the
'most attainable heigth's of Heavenly-minded Christi-
'anity.

These

These are the very Words of this excellent Man; which let any Separatists impartially consider, and then tell me, if impos'd Corruptions in a true Church, be sufficient to excuse their Separation from it.

But the Question is, what are Corruptions and Impositions in the Worship of God. Suppose an hot headed Man, who in the late times of Rebellion and Confusion took upon him the Liberty to call such and such things Corruptions; doth this warrant them to be truly such?

Let us consider what the more cool and temperate Writers before the Wars called corrupt Impositions.

Mr. Byfeild, in his Commentary upon St. Peter, and particularly upon this Text, *Submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake*, saith; 'That in 'Church Matters, the Magistrate may command, and 'the Subject must obey. And he sets down a Catalogue of many things called *Inventions of Man*, used in the Worship of God, without any Commandment of God, both before the Law, under the Law, and after the Law, that might lawfully be used. 'Nay '(saith he) Inconvenient Ceremonies in the Wor-'ship of God may be used, to prevent worse Incon-'veniencies. And then he goes on mentioning the particulars, *Page* 435. 'In Ceremonial and Circum-'stantial things, it is not always a Sin to swerve from 'Examples in Scripture. It does not follow that if 'Christ did sit at the Supper, therefore it's unlawful 'to kneel. Sitting at the Sacrament was manifestly 'a Humane Invention; which shews that the Com-'mandments of God about Circumstantial things 'might in some cases be transgressed without Sin, and 'were never intended to bind the Conscience absolutely

1 Pet. 2. 13.

'lutely as Moral Precepts in Substantials did. As for 'Example. The Command of God was that every 'Man-Child should be Circumcised the eighth Day; 'Yet the Children of *Israel* were not Circumcised in 'the *Wilderness* for fourty years together, *&c.* Nay, '(saith he) some significant Ceremonies were law-'ful: As the Altar by *Jordan*, the Cup at the Passo-'ver, the covering on the Heads of Women, and 'the Love Feast, with the Holy Kiss. Read the Au-'thor, and you will receive more Satisfaction.

Mr. Sprint, the Eminent old *Conformist*, who wrote that learned and Pious Book called the *Necessity of Conformity in Case of Deprivation*, will likewise sufficiently satisfy any unprejudic'd Reader, who is willing to read the Arguments on both sides.

Mr. Perkins, likewise, *in his Exposition upon the Epistle of Jude*, hath this passage. 'If (says he) the 'Church err in matter of Religion, then must we 'consider whether the error be in a more weighty 'and substantial Point, or in matter of less impor-'tance. If it be in smaller points, (the Foundation 'being kept) we may not separate our selves. If it 'be in Substance of Doctrine, or in the Foundation, 'then we must consider whether it err of Humane 'Frailty, or of Obstinacy: If of Frailty, we may not 'separate. The *Church of Galatia* was through Frail-'ty quickly turned to another Gospel, and erred in 'the Foundation, holding Justification by Works; 'yet *Paul* writeth unto it as unto a *Church of God.* 'So likewise the *Church of Corinth* erred grievously, 'and overthrew the *Article of the Resurrection*; and 'yet *Paul* behaved himself accordingly unto it. But if 'the Church err in the Substance of Religion obsti-'nately, then with good Conscience Separation may 'be made. Whence we see (as he afterwards con-

clude

'cludes) that no man may with good Conſcience 'ſeparate himſelf from the Church of *England*; ſeeing 'it teacheth, believeth, and obeyeth the Doctrine of 'the Prophets and Apoſtles.

The Reverend *Mr. Gurnal*, in his Book called *the Chriſtian in compleat Armour*, doth exceedingly condemn the ſcrupulous Separatiſts, who turn their Backs upon the Publick Worſhip of God, becauſe of ſome faults in the Adminiſtration. 'We find, indeed, 'ſaith he, Formality forbidden, but not Forms of 'Prayer: And we are commanded to *beware of the lea-* 'ven of the Phariſees, but we are not forbidden to 'hear their Doctrine.

Mr. Hudſon, in his *Vindication of the Eſſence and Unity of the Catholick Church*, greatly Laments Separation from the Publick Aſſemblies; and condemns thoſe, who call their own Mother Whore, by nameing our *Church*, *Babylon*, *Egypt*, *Rome*, &c. That they may ſcum the Cream off our Aſſemblies, Diviſion, ſaith he, is the Devil's Muſick, that which makes him laugh, ſhould make us weep.

This Paſſage of *Mr. Gataker's*, is likewiſe very obſervable, that it's the Work of Angels, not men; at the end of the World, not now, to gather out of Chriſt's Kingdom all things that offend.

By what then hath been alledged, this Argument for Separation muſt neceſſarily fall to the Ground: And tho there were really thoſe Corruptions which the Diſſenters do pretend (as I'me ſure there is not) in the Publick Worſhip of our Parochial Aſſemblies; yet ſince all are ſatisfyed that the Subſtance of it is found and good, no man can, with a good Conſcience, actuated by Chriſtian Principles, abſent himſelf upon that account.

Well then (replyes the Separatiſt) *I would go to the* 3 Obj.

the Publick Assemblies if I were left to my own Liberty of Conscience, but I cannot do it being compelled by Penalties, and so imposed upon.

Answ. Why did you not do it then, when you were left to your liberty by *Indulgence*? What Compulsion absented you, when his Majesty granted you Liberty of Conscience? Then you would not come, because Authority did not compell you to it; and now you refuse, because it does. What a strange, irrational way is this, of humouring your Arguments? What a querulous unchristian temper does such an Objection discover? I'm sure it would be judged a surly temper, and an high Act of Disobedience in any of your own Children, to tell you, he will not do such or such a thing because you impose your Commands, and require him to do it, and do not leave him to his own Liberty. But (to convince you fairly of this) pray consider the force of this plain Argument seriously with your selves, *viz.* Whatever is commanded by the Government, under which we live, and is no Sin against the Soveraignty of Almighty God, is a Christian's Duty. But to attend the Publick Worship of God, is commanded by the Government under which we live, and is no Sin against Almighty God. *Erg.* It is an indispensable undoubted Duty.

The *Major* Proposition in this Argument is plain from Scripture, *Rom.* 13. 1 *Tit.* 3, 1. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. The *Minor* consists of two parts. First, the Government requires it, and secondly, It's no Sin against God. The first part is proved by the Law of the Land: The second is proved by the subsequent Arguments.

That which satisfyeth the Government under which we live, being sin, is a Subject's Duty. But such

ſuch Attendance upon Publick Worſhip ſuits and ſatisfies the Government. *Erg.* It's our Duty.

For if we ought to *Pray for Magiſtrates* that *we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life under them*, it's no leſs our duty to do all lawful actions in order to the ſame end. 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.

If it be our duty to *follow Peace with all men*, the Magiſtrate is undoubtedly comprehended, and may juſtly claim a Preheminence. If it be our Duty *to ſerve all Men* in all lawful and honeſt things, why muſt the Magiſtrate be excluded? Shall places of Power be ſhut out of this common Priviledge? The great example of our bleſſed Saviour would hereby be thwarted, who conformed to an Humane Edict, becauſe the Power commanded, and leaſt he ſhould give offence. Heb. 12. 14. Gal. 5. 13.

And St. *Paul became all things to all men*; and we have an Apoſtolical Canon for Obedience which we ought to follow, if we profeſs our ſelves Chriſtians. 1 Cor. 9. 22.

Men muſt not imagine they can free themſelves from Subjection to lawful Authority by wreſted Interpretations and perverſe Applications of Holy Scripture; as one lately, who told his Miniſter, That *Chriſt had commanded him to ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith he had made him free.* It's very frequent to hear Chriſtians called upon to *come out of* Babylon, who were never in it; and to apply thoſe Scriptures which call upon men to come out from amongſt Idolaters and Heathens, as if ſpoken to Chriſtians to ſeparate from Religious Aſſemblies, becauſe (perhaps) of ſome Corruptions. For ſhame let us not cry out againſt *Papiſts* for making the Scriptures a Noſe of Wax, and do the ſame our ſelves.

Some Men (ſaith Mr. *Baxter*) who Plead for Liberty of Conſcience, deny'd his Majeſty (the late Royal Martyr) the uſe of His own Chaplains, and of the Form preſcribed in the Liturgy.

Do but consider the Judgments of your own Teachers about this matter; and you shall find most of them agreeing in this, That the Imposition of things (not oppugning the Divine Law) by Lawful Authority, ought rather to be an Argument for Obedience, than against it. And this is acknowledg'd by divers *Nonconformists*, at the very *Savoy-Conference*; "That an "Inconvenient Mode of Worship may be a Sin in the "Imposer and in the Chooser and Voluntary User, "who may offer God better and will not. And yet it "may be, not only Lawful, but a Duty to him, who "is necessitated to offer up that or none.

Nay, The *Independents* themselves acknowledge, That a Man is obliged in Conscience to hold Communion but with the Purest Church they can.

Now, if our Constitutions are such, that the *Parochial Assemblies* are the Purest Church we are permitted to hold Communion with, then we ought to hold Communion with them by their own Argument, or else to go into other Countries where we may enjoy our Liberty in this Particular without breaking the Laws or disturbing the Publick Peace.

Mr. *Knewstubs* (the old *Nonconformist*) had so great a Reverence for the Laws, That he tells his Readers in his *Epistle before his Sermons*, 'That he would 'not have his Book keep them at home to read on the 'Lord's Days, but would have them attend the Publick Worship of God notwithstanding.

And Mr. *Sheffield*, in *his Discourse of Excuses*, saith, 'It may be lawful to read a good Book at home on a 'Sabbath Day; but if nothing hinder, it is both scandalous and sinful to forbear coming to the Publick 'Worship of God. Christian Liberty frees us not 'from Subjection to the Laws of God, nor from obedience to the Laws of Humane Authority.

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The Laws made to compel men to attend the Publick Worship of God, were excellently designed in their Original and Piously intended. Men ought to prefer a Publick Good before a Private Humour. For (as is well observ'd in Mr. *Dury's Epistolatory Discourses*) 'It would lay the Foundation for Strifes and Divisions 'in a Kingdom to have two ways of Church Govern- 'ment. It may agree with *Machiavillian*, but with no 'Christian Policy. Therefore to keep Unity intire, 'the Few must yield to the Major Votes.

'There's no man in his right reason (says a Reverend 'Nonconforming Divine) but will say there is a ne- 'cessity of Government, and if of a Government, then 'of *Uniformity*; for Schism in the Church threatens 'Ruine in the State. The Scepter can never be carried 'steddy, where the Winds of contrary Doctrines blow.

Mr. *Stronge*, in his Sermons called, *Two Sticks made one*, saith, that 'The way to Peace and Unity is for 'men to condescend and yield to Government as far as 'they lawfully can, even against their own Rights.

Thus, Instead of murmuring against *Moses* and *Aaron*, every Wise and Good man thinks it his Duty to give *Thanks for Kings, and for all that are in Authority*, 1 Tim. 2. 1. that God does incline their Hearts to make Laws to compel men to attend his Publick Worship. True Loyalty being a part of their Religion, they had rather the Civil Magistrate should drive them out of the Private *Conventicle* into the Publick Assemblies, than out of the Publick Assembly, into the Private *Conventicles*.

But we have now more Light than formerly, and the Case (say they) *is altered upon that account.* 4. Obj.

Suppose we have; if the light we pretend to be Darkness, How great is that Darkness? If our too much Light hath so scattered our sight (as Mr. *Reynor* in his *Apology for Learning*, notably observes) 'That we can- *Ans.*

'not see our Duty, we have more cause to mourn 'than to boast. If we are struck blind with Revelati-'ons, and become not able to see for Visions, let us 'beg pity rather than slight Counsel.

Read Mr. *Edwards's* Epistle to *his Gangrena*, and he tells you what effects our greater Light hath produced, *viz.* 'Our Reformation hath produced De-'formation. The Parliament put down *Common-Prayer*, 'and the Sectaries Cry down the *Scriptures*. They 'laid aside the Cross in Baptism, and these Baptism it 'self. The one pulled down the Picture of the Tri-'nity, and the other deny the Doctrine of it. The 'former were against Pluralities, and the others against 'Ministers Maintenance.

And Mr. *Case*, in *his Sermon before the* Parliament, tells the World, 'That the Errors in the Bishop's 'days were but *Tolerabiles Ineptiæ* compared with the '*Doctrines of Devils*, taught afterwards.

And, in the *Epistle to Mr.* Pool's *Book against* Beedle, we are told, That 'Errors formerly walked in the dark, 'but now they appeared *(Cum Privilegio)* at Noon-'day; such is the effect of our new and clearer Light.

Mr. *Baxter* in *The Defence of his Cure*, &c. tells us, 'That the old *Nonconformists* were neither Blind nor 'Temporizers. They saw the danger on both sides 'as well as we. Our Light is not clearer but less than 'theirs. We see not further into that Cause than they 'did. Change of time doth not change the Truth, nor 'will warrant us to change our Religion unless we re-'solve to change as often as the Times change. If 'we read over the Old *Nonconformists* Books against 'Separation, we shall find the same Objections answer-'ed. Then judge whether their Case and our's was 'not the same. Indeed the Case of Ministers Confor-'mity is much altered by a new Act, which requires 'sub-

'ſubſcribing new things; but that part of the Liturgy, 'which the People are to joyn in, is made better and 'eaſier, it being amended by change of the Tranſla- 'tion, and by ſome things explained, and ſome longer 'Prayers. And thirty years ago there were many bare 'Reading, no Preaching Miniſters for one that there 'is now. Therefore our Caſe of Separation being the 'ſame with what it was of Old, it pities me to hear 'many ſay, we are grown wiſer now, and have more 'Light than they; whereas our Writings ſhew upon 'the ſame Subject, that we are far below them. The 'World knows that the Turn of the Times put moſt of 'us into the ſudden poſſeſſion of our Opinions with- 'out one half of the Study which *Ames*, *Cartwright*, '*Parker*, and others beſtowed upon theſe Points. As 'for them that ſay, If Mr. *Dod*, *Hilderſham*, and *Ro- 'gers* were now alive, they would have been of their 'Minds, I deſire them to prove it, or not affirm it. Did 'the Old *Nonconformiſts* want Light and Heat that 'could burn at a Stake for their Religion? Thus 'cloſely to the Point is Mr. *Baxter*.

And Mr. *Calamy*, likewiſe, expoſtulating with Mr. *Burton* the *Independent*; 'Deſires to know of him, 'Whether the old *Nonconformiſts* did not underſtand 'the Pattern of God's Houſe as well as he; and yet 'they were againſt Separation.

Mr. *Paul Baines* denied, before the *King* and *Coun- cil*, his keeping any *Conventicle*. And told them. 'It 'was only ſome Private Chriſtians came one Day to 'his Houſe to be reſolved in a Caſe of *Conſcience*. See his 'Life.

Mr. *Cotton* (on *the Canticles* pag. 44.) obſerves, 'That it's no Impeachment to Chriſtian Liberty to 'ſubmit to Chriſtian Laws. It's Rebellion makes men 'ſay, *Let us break their Bands in ſunder, and caſt away* Pſal. 2, 3. '*their Cords from us*.

Mr.

Mr. *Ball*, I imagine, may charitably be ſuppos'd to have had the Spirit of God in as great a meaſure as any of our Diſſenters; yet he declares that 'He did not 'approve of the Practice of our Modern *Independents*, 'who at one Jump, leap'd both out of the Surplice and 'out of the Publick Aſſemblies alſo. See Mr. *Newco-'men's Irenicum, in the Preface.*

Mr. *Greenham* (as you may read in *his Life*) made it his Buſineſs to do good and to prevent Schiſms, to perſwade to Peaceableneſs and Obedience; and told Dr. *Burges*, that 'He durſt not Diſcourage any from 'attending upon the Publick Worſhip of God to 'avoid the Ceremonies.

Mr. *Dod*, *on the Commandements*, perſuades People to come to Church at the beginning of the Publick Prayers, performed by the Liturgy; 'And not the 'Husband come when the Prayers are half ended, and 'the Wife when the Prayers are quite ended. And he adviſed his own Daughter to take the Sacrament kneeling. As may be ſeen in the Epiſtle to *Biſhop* Morton's *Book of Epiſcopacy*, written by Sir *Henry Yelverton.*

But now to give you one Paſſage for all (further to convince you, that it is not ſtrength of Grace, but Weakneſs, which is now the Cauſe of Separation) take this Remarkable one of Mr. *Baxter's*, which he himſelf gives you, in *his Character of a weak Chriſtian.*

'It's certainly (ſays he) a ſign of a Weak Infirm 'Chriſtian, who is not arrived to a confirmed State of 'Grace, to cauſe Diſcord and Diviſions in the Church, 'and to run into unwarrantable Separations upon eve-'ry Modal Imperfection; and becauſe his Charity is 'ſmall he is apt to cenſure the ſtrong Chriſtian who 'hath more experience, and to think him unworthy 'his Communion. He is apt to be unreaſonably con-

'fident

'fident of his own Apprehenſions, as if all his Con-
'ceptions were certain truth, and thinks all men Ig-
'norant or Ungodly that differ from him, becauſe he
'hath not impartially and thorowly ſtudied all that
'may be ſaid on the other ſide. The Authority of his
'choſen Teacher or Sect is greater with him than the
'Authority of all the Wiſe and Holy Perſons in the
'World beſide. If Diſcipline be neglected, if God-
'lineſs be not promoted, and Prophaneneſs be not diſ-
'couraged, the weak Chriſtian thinks ſuch a Church
'to be no Church. God hath taught him by Repen-
'tance to ſee the miſchiefs of ungodlineſs, but he wants
'experience to know the Miſchiefs of Church-Diviſi-
'ons. He knows the Evil of Sin, but not the Evil of
'Schiſm. Sometimes the Weak Chriſtian will be Or-
'thodox overmuch, and then none will be fit for his
'Communion that be not of his Opinions in Contro-
'verted Doctrinals; ſuch as *Predeſtination*, *Free-will*,
'*The Manner of the Work of Grace*, *Perſeverance*, and
'ſuch like. Sometimes the Weak Chriſtian will be Su-
'perſtitious over-much, and then none are fit for his
'Communion that Worſhip not God in the Method for
'Circumſtantials that he judgeth beſt; and oftentimes
'by his peeviſhneſs and ignorance he proves a greater
'hinderance to the Churches Unity, than the Enemies
'to the Church themſelves. He doth not love thoſe
'healing Books and Sermons, which narrow Differen-
'ces, and tend to Reconcile; but rather ſuch as call
'aloud for Zeal for this or that controverted Point of
'Doctrine; or againſt ſome Circumſtance of Worſhip
'or Diſcipline; and cenſureth many a Wiſer Chriſtian
'than himſelf, for many a ſuppoſed Sin, which is no
'Sin, but a Duty. If he heads a hard Name againſt
'any *Opinion* or *Way* of Worſhip, he preſently takes a
'Prejudice againſt it; which prevails more with him

'than

'than Reason could have done. If a Zealous Preacher 'do but call an *Opinion* or *Practice Antichristian*, it's a 'more effectual terror, than clearer proof. In the '*Litigious* Titles of *Pretenders to Supremacy*, he is too 'hasty to interess himself in their *Contentions*, when 'the Controversie is only amongst States-Men and Law-'yers, and belongs not to *Religion*, yet the Odium 'shall be cast upon Christianity and Piety.

'The Weak Christian having too little *Patience* and 'too much Passion is easily tempted to break his Mat. 26. 'Bounds, and like *Peter* to run to his Unauthorized 51, & 52. '*Sword*, when he should submit to Suffering; So that 'he is apt to think that lawful which may be necessary 'to his Preservation; and presently thinks the Church 'is falling, when Humane Power is turned against it; 'and therefore with *Uzzah* he must put forth his hand 'to save the Ark, though it cost him his Life.

Now I cannot imagine (from what this Reverend Man hath here said) How Men, of this Crazy Constitution of Soul and low Stature in Christianity, can pretend to greater Light and more clear Discoveries; as if they were gotten into the Upper Form in the School of Christ, when they know not enough to discover their own Ignorance. So that by this Character of a Weak Christian we may judge of the Vanity of this Objection, in pleading for Separation more now than formerly upon pretence of more Experience, Knowledge, or Light. Such as think they have more Light, let them more diligently make use of it to see their Mistakes, and avoid them by it; and endeavour to Eph. 5. 8. *walk as Children of* that *Light*, which serves principally Luk. 1. 79. for this very end, *to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace.*

Another Objection, here of late, made use of to excuse Separation from the Publick Worship of God in our Parish Assemblies, is this.

If

If (ſay they) *we ſhould now join in Communion with the Church of* England, *we ſhould ſeem guilty of* Apoſtacy, *in building up the things we our ſelves once deſtroyed.* 5. Obj.

An Objection this, how contrary to the Opinion and Practice of many of your own Teachers, I leave you to judge from the ſerious peruſal of the following Inſtances. Mr. *Baxter* in his *Defence of his Cure*, &c. hath this paſſage. *Anſw.*

'It is not (ſaith he) here convenient to inquire 'who hath deſtroyed Reformation, tho' it be eaſy to 'diſcern it. But this is certain, God hath ſet up the 'Government, that is over us, and our Governours 'take down, by their Laws, that which perhaps we 'accounted Reformation. This is not our Work, but 'theirs: They permit us not otherwiſe publickly to 'Worſhip God. And a Man in Goal doth ordinari-'ly joyn in no Publick Worſhip at all: And where 'Men are in forbidden Aſſemblies, the fears of ſome, 'the paſſionate Diſcontents of others, and the diſtur-'bance by Soldiers, and Officers do take off much of 'the Edification, and hinder us from ſuch a frame 'of Mind as is moſt deſirable. To Worſhip God no 'where, is to go farther from Reformation, than to 'Worſhip him by the Liturgie. To do it of choice is 'one thing, and to do it as a Duty put upon us by 'God's Providence, and our Governours is another. 'It is God that hath pulled down our Liberty to 'ſerve him otherwiſe, and we muſt obey him. It's 'no faulty Mutability to change our Practice, when 'God by changing our Condition doth change our 'Duty; no more than it was in Saint *Paul*, who *to 'the Jews became a Jew*, and *Circumciſed Timothy*, and 'ſhaved his Head, and *became all things to all men.* 'And no more than it was to St. *Auguſtin*, who pro-'feſſeth that he would Worſhip God, as to Forms and

'Ceremonies, according as the Church did with which 'he joyned wherever he came. It is ſinful Pride and 'Tenderneſs of our own Honour that makes ſome men 'avoid their Duty, becauſe thoſe that are againſt them 'take occaſion to reproach them, and call them *Apo-'ſtates* and Time-Servers. Can theſe Men ſuffer Death 'for their Religion, that cannot bear a little Reproach 'for it? We muſt not make ſuch carnal Policies our 'Guide, as to forbear that which God doth make our 'Duty.

This is Mr. *Baxter's* Sentiment of your Scruple, which his Practice ſeems to countenance as little; when writing his *Retractions* in theſe following Words, he declar'd how little he fear'd being branded with Apoſtacy, in doing what his Duty obliged him to.

'I repent (ſaith he) of all that ever I ſaid, wrote, or 'did ſince I was born, againſt the Peace of Church 'or State; againſt the King, His Perſon, or Authori-'ty, as Supream in himſelf, or as Derivative in any 'of his Officers, or any commiſſioned by him. I repent 'that I no more diſcouraged the Spirit of peeviſh quar-'relling with Superiors, and Church-Orders; but ra-'ther too much encouraged ſuch, by ſpeaking too 'ſharply againſt thoſe things which I thought to be 'Church-Corruptions. I repent that I did not more 'impartially conſult with the beſt Lawyers that were 'againſt the Parliaments Cauſe—— See his *Admoniti-on to* Bagſhaw.

Mr. Bruning *of* Ipſwich, in that (already quoted) *Sermon* of his, *at the Election of Parliament Men in* 1660, was ſo honeſt as to acknowledge 'That the time paſt 'had been a time of exquiſite Temptation; ſo that 'ſome that belonged to God, and were dear to him, 'had ſadly miſcarryed in the Simplicity of their hearts, 'by others more crafty than themſelves.

And

And Mr. *Newcome*, in that *Loyal* Sermon of his, called *Uſurpation Defeated, and David Reſtored* (preached by him on the publick Solemn Day of Thankſgiving, *May* 24. 1660. in the Collegiate Church of *Mancheſter*) thus reflected (and was never yet thought guilty of *Apoſtacy*) upon the late paſt Times and Actions: 'Oh (ſays he) what Pretences of 'Religion and Godlineſs hath there been in the late 'Miſchiefs, that have been perpetrated? Calling upon 'God; appealing unto God to decide the Controver-'ſie, nay, perpetrating Villainy upon Impulſes pre-'tended from the Spirit of God, Security of Religion, 'Liberty for Tender Conſciences, *&c.* This hath been 'cryed up, as their *Good Old Cauſe*, that had the Blood 'of *Kings* and *Prophets* at the bottom of it, like that '*Mic.* 2. 10, 11. Nay, their Unheard of Villanies are 'made the fulfilling of their Vows: No return for 'their Deliverances and Victories ſo proper, as to 'raiſe our Foundations, *Murther our King*, pull 'down the *Miniſtry*, &c. as no doubt it was in de-'ſign, yet all along to advance *Religion* too.

Mr. *Humphreys* did not think himſelf guilty of Apoſtacy, when he wrote himſelf *A Conforming Pariſhioner, tho he were a Nonconforming Miniſter.*

It's a good Obſervation of Mr. *Wells* in his *Practical Sabbatarian*, 'That the Sabbath is not duely ſancti-'fied without our Attendance upon God's Publick 'Worſhip. *Keeping the Sabbath*, and *reverencing the San-ctuary*, being inſeparably conjoyned.

You who are ſo afraid of Apoſtacy, as you call it, read the Story of *Penry*, the Separatiſt (in Mr. *Cotton* againſt *Williams*, *pag.* 117.) executed in Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, who at the Place of Execution told the World, That he had grievouſly offended the Queens Majeſty, and drawn away many of her Loy-

al Subjects into Separation, from the publick Assemblies; and, tho he did see his Error, and begged Pardon, yet, because he could not recal those whom he had led away, therefore he acknowledgeth, that their Blood might justly be required at his Hands.

Mr. *Fox*, who compiled *The Book of Martyrs*, did not think it Apostacy to complain of the factious turbulent Spirits which had possess'd the rigid Separatists in his Time; and he saith, 'They despised him, be-'cause he would not rail against Bishops as they 'did: And therefore, he advised Governours to look 'narrowly after those Men, whose Hypocrisie was 'more pernicious than that of the Old Monks: For 'under a Pretence of greater Purity, they will never 'give over, until they have brought us under a *Jewish* 'Slavery——See his Letter in Dr. *Fuller*'s Church History, *Lib.* 9. *p.* 106.

Mr. *Brown*, from whom the *Brownists* first took their Name, did not think it *Apostacy, and a building the things he once destroyed*, for to renounce the Principles and Practice of Separation, and take a Parsonage called a Church. God in a strange and wise Providence so ordering it, that he, who had utterly renounced all Churches in *England*, as no Churches, should afterwards accept of one Parish Church among them called a Church. Have not many amongst us, who cry out against Apostacy, Apostatized from their former Principles, and turned Independants; and so *built the things they once destroyed*, to comply with a politick Interest.

Honest Mr. *Parker*, the Old Nonconformist, could say to the last (as may be seen in his Book, called, *The prophane Schism of the* Brownist, *Chap.* 12.) 'It grieves 'me to think that I, who have written so much against 'the Separatists, should have the Dung of that Sect

'flung

'flung in my Face, which with all my Power I have 'resisted in the whole Course of my Ministry in *Eng-* 'land. And tho I think many of them fear God; yet I 'must apply our Lords Words to them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luk. 23. 24.

To Conclude, did Dr. *Reynolds* Apostatize, when on his Death-Bed he desired to receive Absolution according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*; and protested to Dr. *Holland*, that he did not argue before King *James* against the Ceremonies as things unlawful, but only as things Inconvenient?

'Let us therefore follow rather that wholesome 'Counsel given us by *Mr. Pagett* in his *Arrow against* 'Separation, and endeavour *to keep Faith and a good* 1 Tim. 1. 'Conscience, and not scare our selves and others, from 19. 'Communion with the Church, with fears of Apostacy. Let us be affraid rather of falling from the *Fa-* 'vour of God, by lapsing into Sin. And as for any 'Nick-named Apostacies, let them go.

Well, But (says the Separatist) *we have entered now into a Solemn League and Covenant to endeavour greater Reformation in the Church, and therefore these good men's Arguments against Separation does not reach our Case.* 6 Obj.

But did one quarter of those that make this Objection ever take the Covenant? And are you obliged to keep it, who never took it? *Answ.*

But suppose you did take that Covenant: By what Authority did you make it? No man can bind himself to that which is not in his Power. And an unlawful Oath is better broken than kept. Make a Covenant to Reform your own Lives and your own Families if you please; and keep it when you have done, and you'll do well: But do not think your self engaged to do your Governours Work.

There's

There's no Covenant can oblige a man to be ſo Superſtitious, to Judge that to be Sinful which is Lawful: Nor yet to be ſo Licentious, to Judge that to be Lawful which is Sinful. Wiſe-men think it as Glorious to become Martyrs for Peace, as Confeſſors for Truth: And will not ſuffer the pretence of Purity, to deſtroy Unity: But can Pray as heartily againſt Schiſms as Hereſies, notwithſtanding any pretence to the contrary. Inſtead of making it a Queſtion, Whether we may Lawfully hold Communion with the Pariſh Aſſembly, the Queſtion ought to be, Whether we may Lawfully Separate from the Publick Worſhip of God, becauſe of ſome different Circumſtantial Modes of Adminiſtration. And I would gladly, then know, whether ever any Man took a Covenant not to inform his Underſtanding in that which is his apparent Duty. Doth the Obligations ſome Men have taken lay a Reſtraint upon Mens Judgments, ſo that they muſt not examine the Doctrines they hear from their Teachers? When they tell their People ſuch and ſuch Practices ſymbolize with the Church of *Rome*, may they not read ſuch Diſcourſes as ſhew *how far* England's *ſymbolizing with the Church of* Rome *is juſt Ground for Separation*? If others ſay kneeling is unlawful at the Sacrament, ſurely Men are not ſo tyed up by *Covenant for Reformation* as not to examine whether it be ſo or no, and to take all for Goſpel which ſome Men deliver. The *Bereans* were commended for examining the Doctrines they were taught.

Acts. 17. 11.

My *Lord Bacon*, indeed, tells us of ſome, in his time, who looked upon it as a tempting of God to read or hear what may be ſaid againſt their Opinion. I fear we have many ſuch in our times; and at this rate Men may ſcruple until they come to their *Everlaſting Reſt*.

But

But I would fain know what ſort of Men among us have taken ſuch a *Covenant for Reformation*, as not to hear and read what may be ſaid againſt their Opinions, as well as what may be ſaid for them? And did not (I pray) they who took it oblige themſelves not only againſt Sin but Schiſme; and have they not broken the very Letter of it themſelves?

I'm ſure *Mr. Watſon* (in his *Anatomy of man's Heart* pag. 13.) told the Parliament that they had done ſo: And that Men act againſt God, when they act againſt that Order and Government which he hath ſet up in the World, and in the Church. 'God hath '(ſays he) ſet up Kings, Nobles and Judges in a 'Deſcent, and this makes up the Harmony; and 'theſe Powers are of God. Magiſtracy is the Hedge 'of a Nation, he that breaks the Hedg the Serpent will 'bite him. Here is juſt Impeachment againſt the Re'ligious Libertine who Pleads for Liberty of Con'ſcience. Conſcience! Muſt he have his Conſcience, 'who hath ſinned away his Conſcience? Conſcience 'muſt have a Rule; It binds only by Virtue of a Pre'cept. Get Conſcience better informed: The Con'ſcience of a Sinner is defiled, being defiled may err, 'and erring may ſuggeſt that which is Sinful: There 'is nothing can bind a Man to ſin. Again, *pag.* 17.' The 'Hypocrite (ſays he) is more Zealous againſt a 'Ceremony than againſt a known Sin: And have we 'not many in our Days Zealous againſt Popery? If 'they ſee a Croſs, tho' in a Coat of Arms, they are 'much offended; but in the mean time, make no 'Conſcience of other Sins. And (on the *Beatitudes*) 'O! how (ſays he) do Hereticks deſtroy the Truth 'of the Church by Error, and Schiſmaticks the Peace 'of it by Diviſions! We have ſo many ſeveral Chur-

'ches

'ches, God may juſtly unchurch us all, as he did *Aſia*.
'The Sectary hath *Sampſon*'s Foxes United to ſet the
'Church on fire.

'To hold Communion (ſaith *Mr. Baxter*, being
'a full Anſwer to this Objection in his *Defence of his*
'*Cure*, &c.) in the Liturgy ordinarily, where we
'cannot have better; and extraordinarily where we
'can have better, is a thing that we are bound to by
'the Covenant, and not at all bound againſt: And
'if there had been any word in it againſt Communion
'with the Churches that uſe the Liturgy, it had been
'Sin, and againſt our Duty, and therefore it could not
'bind. It is commonly agreed that if we vow a thing
'indifferent, it binds us not when the indifferency
'ceaſeth; which may be by the Magiſtrates Com-
'mand, or by another Man's Neceſſity, or by Change
'of Caſes: elſe a man might before hand prevent moſt
'of the Magiſtrates Obligations, and his Parents, and
'Maſters too, and eſcape Obedience, and then ſay
'with the Phariſee, it is *Corban*, or a devoted thing.
'We ought not to go to the Covenant to know
'what's our Duty in the Worſhip of God, but to the
'Scriptures, and if the Scripture make it not a Duty,
'the Magiſtrate's Law will make the doing of it a Sin;
'And if Scripture make it not a Sin, the Magiſtrates
'Command will make it a Duty. But when we know
'what is Duty or Sin, we may go to our Vows next, to
'prove that it is a double Duty, or an aggravated
'Sin, but not otherwiſe. The Covenant or Vow ex-
'preſly binds us againſt Schiſme, and the Renunciati-
'on of Communion is plain Schiſm. The Covenant
'binds us againſt all that's contrary to the *Power of*
'*Godlineſs* and ſound Doctrine; but the Separation
'which I plead againſt, is certainly ſuch. The Cove-
'nant binds us to Unity and the neareſt uniformity

'we

'we can attain; but as the World goeth now, this 'Communion is the neareſt, and needful to expreſs 'our Unity. The Covenant binds us to *Reformati-* 'on according to Gods Word, and the Example of 'the beſt Reformed Churches: But to prefer no Pub- 'lick Worſhip or a worſe before the Liturgy, is De- 'formation and Prophanation. It's greater Refor- 'mation to prefer the Liturgy before none, than to 'prefer extemporary Publick Worſhip before the Li- 'turgy. All Reformed Churches in *Chryſtendom* do 'commonly profeſs to hold Communion with the *En-* '*gliſh* Churches in the Liturgy if they come amongſt 'us where it is uſed. Therefore it ſeems to me to 'be Perjury and Covenant breaking, either to pre- 'fer no Publick Worſhip before the Liturgy, or to 'refuſe Communion with the Churches that uſe the 'Liturgy as a thing meerly on that account unlaw- 'ful.

Nay, ſee the ſame Author's rejoicing for his keeping his own people from taking this *Covenant*, in his *Farewel Sermon* to them of *Kidderminſter*, lately publiſhed. *pag.* 37.

Mr. Crofton, who was ſent to the Tower for writing in the Defence of the Covenant, yet, confeſſed 'that he ſaw nothing in the Liturgy, but what, with 'a candid Interpretation, a good Chriſtian might ſay '*Amen* to.

The *Aſſembly of Divines*, who framed the Covenant (and therefore beſt underſtood the extent of its Obligation) were againſt Separation, except five of them. And in their *larger Catachiſm*, they thought fit to prefix the *Advice of the* Scotiſh *Divines*. 'That 'at Family Worſhip care ought to be taken that each 'Family meet by themſelves, leſt it tend to the pre- 'judice of the Publick Miniſtry, and cauſe Schiſmes 'and Separations in the Church.

Mr. Corbet, in his *Plea for Lay Communion*, tells the World, 'That the Covenant or any engagement for 'Reformation can lay no Obligation to any thing that 'is not in our Power: And that it obligeth us againſt 'Separation and not to it.

And now let any Separatiſt but ſeriouſly conſider, what the Wiſeſt-men of his own Party hath here told him, And he will ſure be aſhamed ever to urge his taking the Covenant as a ſufficient Plea for his Separation.

But let ſuch who inſiſt ſo much upon a Covenant remember that they have taken a ſacred Covenant to keep all Gods Commands; one of which is, to obey their Superiors both in Church and State: And their Salvation depends upon it.

7 Obj. *But* (ſtill objects, now-a-days, our Separatiſt) *If I comply with the Liturgy at this Time, I ſhould gratifie the* Papiſts, *and weaken the* Proteſtant *Intereſt*, &c.

Anſw. This is ſo far from being true, that the quite contrary is true: For all the Arguments of *Bellarmine* ne'er did ſo much propagate Popery, as Diviſion and Separation hath done. The Jeſuites ſtand and clap their Hands to ſee the peeviſh Sectary ſtand out, and oppoſe the Government for Trifles.

Mr. *Wood*, Profeſſor of Divinity at St. *Andrews*, writing againſt *Lochier*, tells the World, 'That the 'ſeparating Principle and Practice is like to prove of 'dangerous Conſequence to the Church of God, a 'Diſgrace to the Reformation, and will, in time, open 'a Door to Popery.

The Learned Mr. *Gataker*, in his *Defence of* Bradſhaw *againſt* Cann, ſaith plainly, 'That the way to 'prevent Popery, is to abhor Separation from the 'Parochial Aſſemblies.

That

That Excellent Preacher, Dr. *Harris* (a Man in great Reputation with our Diſſenting Brethren, freely declared, 'That he conceived the way of gathering 'Churches into private places, to be very prejudicial 'to the publick Worſhip of God; and gave this Ad-'vice to his Children, to carry themſelves dutifully to-'wards Authority; to ſee God in the Magiſtrate, and 'to look upon Order as a precious thing; and nei-'ther be Authors, nor Fautors of any, either Faction, 'or Novelty. *See his Life.*

Mr. *Hilderſham*, in his Printed *Letter about Communion with the Church of* England, written to a Gentlewoman who was ſent to Priſon, becauſe ſhe would not go to Church; he tells her, 'That a private Chri-'ſtian may diſlike the Corruptions that are in a Church; 'and may pray, and uſe all lawful means towards a 'Reformation; but he ought not to account all the 'Churches in a Nation as Heathens and Publicans, 'that is, ſuch as with whom they may not lawfully 'communicate, and joyn in the publick Service of 'God. And Mr. *Cotton* in his *Epiſtle to Mr.* Hilderſham's *Letters upon* John, particularly mentions that Letter, and ſaith, 'It hath ſo ſtrongly and clearly 'convinced the Iniquity of that way of Separation, that 'I could not (ſaith he) but acknowledge in it, both the 'Wiſdom of God, and the Weakneſs of the Separa-'tiſt's Arguments, who, endeavouring to anſwer it, 'hath given himſelf, and his Cauſe ſuch a deadly 'Wound in open View, as neither himſelf, nor all his 'Aſſociates can be able to heal.

Dr. Bates, *in his Farewel Sermon*, preſſes to Peace and Unity, upon the conſideration of the great Improvement the *Romaniſts* made of our Animoſities and Diviſions; they warming themſelves at our Flames.

Dr. Barlow Bishop of Lincoln.

'If ever Popery come into *England*, it must be at 'the Breaches made by Division and Separation (as 'a Learned Prelate of our Church observes) 'There 'is a Necessity of maintaining the present established 'Religion, in order to the prevention of Popery, 'whatever idle Men dream to the contrary. Read the Discourse, called *Foxes and Firebrands*, and then let any man be of another Opinion if he can, and keep his Reason at the same time.

The most Reverend Archbishop *Usher* (as you may see in *his Life*) did, the last time he was in *London*, with great Thoughts of Heart, lament our woful Divisions and Separations, and the Animosities kindled amongst Christians upon the account of their several Opinions in matters of Religion. And observing how some opposed the Publick Ministry and Sacraments, and others spread Heresies and Blasphemy, he said, 'He was confident the Enemy which had sowed 'these Tares up and down the Nation were Popish 'Agents, sent out of their Seminaries in sundry Dis-'guises; which, if not suppress, would Issue in an 'Inundation of Popery, And accordingly that Pas-'sage is observable of *Mounsier de l' Angle's* (Minister 'of the Protestant Church at *Roven* in *France*) in 'his Book, written in the Year 1660, containing an 'excellent Character of his *Majesty*, the Present *King* '*of England* (whom God long Preserve!) Thus con-'cluding, by way of *Letter to his Friend*. '*Sir*, This 'Prince is no such Person as the Jesuits report him. 'For his re-establishment is not a thing they hope 'for, but fear as a Thunderbolt; because they know, 'if he be once restored, he will rectifie those Disorders 'those Persons have fomented, who push on the Jesu-'its Designs, and help them to fish in troubled Wa-'ters, as hitherto they have done.

Nay,

Nay, It hath constantly been the sence of many other Sagacious and Wise Men, when once they saw *Faction* to grow bold and sturdy, greatly to fear, that the Protestant Interest would be sadly wounded by it; and they have, as it were by a Prophetick Spirit, told us to this Purpose; that if ever *Popery* did return into this Nation, it ought to be laid chiefly at the *Schismaticks* door. And 'tis a *Rule* among the Jesuits themselves, *Dissensiones errantium alet*, &c. That the Dissentions among *Protestants* do serve the Interest of the *Roman* Cause. So that this very Objection which the Separatist here uses as an Argument for his Separation, doth fly back into his own face to Upbraid him for it, and persuade him strongly against it. *Contzen. Politic. l. 2. c. 19. §. 6.*

Such (I'm confident) was Mr. *Hildersham's* Sentiment; who was so far from thinking Communion with our Church an Encouragement to *Papists* in their Idolatry, that he himself (as some now living can witness) took the Sacrament kneeling. And an Informer once swore, that he saw two of his Congregation who did not Kneel, for which they were Fined: From whence it likewise appears, that himself and the rest did Kneel. So necessary do all good men (yea as even our Saviour himself did) think Union, to preserve the Peace and Purity of our Church. *Every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to Desolation and every City or House divided against it self, shall not stand.* Mat. 12. 25.

But notwithstanding all this, I cannot (Objects still the Separatist) *hold Communion with Railers and Persecutors; and such Scandalous Persons, as are most, both Ministers and People in the Publick Assemblies now.* 8. Obj.

Are not you one your self, whilst you say so of others? I'm sure Dr. *Manton* in his *Sermons on the* 119*th* *Answ.*

Psalm,

Pſalm, much condemns this Antichriſtian Spirit, that prevails amongſt *Proteſtants*, in cenſuring one another upon the account of different Apprehenſions in leſſer Matters, when they agree in the Foundation; it being a great fault to cauſe Factions and Diviſions in the Church, and then not indure to hear of it. And, as Mr. *Baxter* well obſerves, in his *Cure of Church Diviſions*, pag. 256. 'Little do many Cenſorious Separa-'tiſts, who cry out againſt a Spirit of Perſecution, 'think that the ſame Spirit is in themſelves. For to 'think and ſpeak evil of others is *Perſecution*. And do 'not our Red-hot Sectaries do ſo, of truly Catholick 'and Sober Chriſtians, who have more latitude than 'themſelves? Calling them Carnal Goſpellers, For-'mal Profeſſors, and meer Moral men? Nay, it may be 'Time-ſervers, Turn-Coats, Apoſtates, and what not? 'Was it not *Perſecution*, when the Separatiſts made 'ſuch Work in *Cromwel*'s time? When ſo many were 'turned out of the Univerſities, and out of the Mini-'ſtry for not engageing? And out of the Magiſtracy 'and Corporations becauſe they would not pray for 'ſucceſs to their Wars, and give God thanks for their 'Victories, where the blood of thouſands of confeſſed-'ly Good men was ſhed?

But I pray tell me, what do you call Perſecution? I doubt, if the Truth were known, you call Legal Proſecution, Perſecution. If you break the Laws, and diſturb the Civil Peace, muſt not the Penalty be exacted, but preſently you cry out of *Perſecution?*

But it may be you think Miniſters are Perſecutors and Railers, if they in their Pulpets condemn Faction in the State, and Schiſm in the Church. Let me tell you, if they ſhould not do it, they were unfaithful to their Office. For never was there more need of Miniſters

niſters *lifting up their Voices like a Trumpet to ſhew the People their Tranſgreſſion*, upon that account. For we have a Generation of men among us of *Antimonarchial* and *Antiepiſcopal* Principles, who have declared their Sin as *Sodom*, and endeavoured if poſſible to blot out the very Name of *Proteſtant* from under Heaven: And like *Jews*, have made uſe of ſuch barbarous means to keep out the *Romans*, which, if God does not wonderfully prevent, will infallibly bring them in. I'm confident that no Loyal *Engliſh* man, nor true *Catholick Chriſtian*, will be prejudiced at his Miniſter, and ſay he's of a Perſecuting Spirit, if he expoſeth the Pragmatical Republican, and the Schiſmatical Separatiſt; *That others may hear and fear, and do no more ſo wickedly.*

Mr. *Wilſon* of *Boſton* could tell his Hearers, that the Cauſe why God had brought ſuch Dreadful Calamities upon that Country of *New-England*, was *Choraiſm* and *Separation*.

Peter Sterry, the *Independent*, was not afraid to meddle with what, ſome thought, he had nothing to do with, when he told the little Parliament, 'That 'God's Deliverance of the *Engliſh* Nation from Nor-'thern Presbytery, was a greater Deliverance, than 'that of the *Gun-powder Treaſon* from the *Roman* 'Papacy.

Mr. *Hearle* could diſcourſe of the Independancy of *Independant Churches* upon Scripture, and it could be taken patiently.

And Dr. *Hill*, at St. *Paul's*, told them, that '*Inde-'pendency* was little better than *Blaſphemy*, a Word not 'fit for Creatures, who are all Dependent upon God.

Theſe Men's Hearers did not run away from them, and call them Tongue-Perſecutors. Nay, I'm ſure, ſhould but the *Nonconforming Miniſters* own words (in

theſe

these few Passages which are in these Papers, and in the many more which might, and have elsewhere been referr'd to) be repeated by any *Conforming Divines*, for their own Opinion, out of the Pulpet, they would presently be branded, with (what the first Broachers themselves must not yet be thought deserving of) the Name of Persecutor, Railor, and the like.

But were our Ministers really such, as their Exclamations falsly represent; yet is even this no sufficient Plea for Separation.

Mr. *Reiner* of *Lincoln*, in his *Resolution of that Question, Whether Grace be essentially necessary to a Minister of the Gospel?* Answers Negatively, and tells you, that 'Demas his Ministry was not to be rejected, notwithstanding he had forsaken St. *Paul*. And 1. He saith, 'God gives Ministerial Abillities to many men (such 'as Illumination, Utterance and Tongues) to whom 'he gives not saving Grace. 2. We have Examples 'of some such, who have been allowed Ministers, and 'Preachers of God's Word, who had Gifts, but no 'Grace, as *Judas*, *Demas*, and such who *Preach 'Christ* out of Envy and Strife, and the Scribes and 'Pharisees.

Mr. *Perkins*, in his *Exposition upon Christ's Sermon on the Mount*, says, 'We may lawfully attend upon the 'Ministry of those men, whose Lives and Conversations are Evil and Offensive, if their Doctrines be 'sound and Good. For the efficacy of the Word and 'Sacraments, administred by Man, is not from the 'Minister but from God. A Letter is not the worse 'because brought by a Dishoneſt Carrier.

Mr. *Pemble*, in his Discourse on the *Nature and Properties of Grace*. pag. 125. saith, 'God sometimes 'makes use of the common gifts of Unregenerate Men 'for the good of the Church; as *Solomon* made use of

'the

'the *Cananites* and Strangers in the building of the 'Temple, *&c.*

And Mr. *Samuel Hieron*, in his Treatiſe called, *The 'Preachers Plea*, ſaith, That 'A Miniſter's Life is no 'ſufficient Argument againſt his Doctrine, or a juſt 'Plea for neglecting his Miniſtry. Put Caſe that all 'Preachers did confute their Sermons with their Evil 'Lives; and had *Eſau*'s Hands with *Jacob*'s Voice; 'and were like a File, which ſmooths other things, 'yet it ſelf remaining rough; this could not make a-'gainſt their Preaching. Is *Phyſick* and *Law* the worſe, 'becauſe ſome men are Lawleſs and Intemperate?

Mr. *Fenner*, in his Sermon, called, *Chriſt's Alarum to Drowſie Saints*, ſays, 'He dare not aſſert that God 'cannot make uſe of an Unregenerate Preacher to 'Convert Souls. Experience hath found this to be 'true. Some Godly Souls have confeſt this very thing, 'that ſuch as now they find to be palpably Carnal, 'have been the Means of their Converſion. God may 'make the Crowing of a Cock a Means to awaken 'St. *Peter*'s Conſcience.

Mr. *Anthony Burges* in his *Treatiſe of Faith and Aſſurance*, pag. 503. ſaith likewiſe, That 'A Corrupt Mi-'niſter may be uſed by God for Converſion of Souls.

And Mr. *Baxter* told *Bagshaw*, That he ſhould not ſcruple to hold Communion with him notwithſtanding he was a Railer, becauſe the Apoſtle forbids only *Civil* eating, not *Religious*. 1 *Cor.* 5. 11.

And is it not fit then, every *Engliſh* Man ſhould ſubmit rather to the Laws of his Country which are not contrary to the Laws of God? And are we not commanded to *keep the King's Commandment, and that in Regard of the Oath of God?* 'Which is not (as Mr. *Poole* hath obſerv'd upon this Text, in his late *Engliſh Annotations*) 'to be underſtood Univerſally, as if the Eccl. 8. 2.

'King ſhould have commanded them to deny or Blaſ-
'pheme God, or to Worſhip Idols, in which Caſe eve-
'ry Chriſtian man, who reads and believes the Bible,
'muſt needs confeſs that the *Iſraelites* eſpecially were
'obliged to obey God rather than Man, but only of
'ſuch Commands as are not contrary to the Will of
'God. Either 1. Becauſe of that Oath which thou
'haſt taken to keep all God's Laws, whereof this of
'Obedience to Superiors is one. Or 2. Becauſe of
'that Covenant or Oath of Fealty and Allegiance
'whereby thou haſt engaged thy ſelf to him. Thus he.

Another Modern Objection that ſome Men make againſt Communion with the Publick Aſſemblies of the Church of *England*, as by Law now eſtabliſhed, is this:

9. Obj. *The way of Preaching is now quite altered, and the Doctrines that are generally Preached are very corrupt; either meer Morality, or elſe thorow-paced* Arminianiſm *and contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of* England.

Anſw. This Objection is vain and trifling, and never made but by Perſons that never, I'm confident, underſtood either what *Morality* or *Arminianiſm* means.

Our Bleſſed Saviour comprehends the *Loving of God with all the Heart, Soul, and Strength*, as the ſubſtance of the Moral Law. And Wiſe and Good men, who have thorowly ſtudied the *Arminian* Controverſies are inclin'd to think that the Difference is more in Words than Things; and a Man may be a very Pious Chriſtian that practiſes the Sermon of a *Calviniſt*, or an *Arminian*, becauſe they agree, if not in their *Doctrine*, yet in their *Application*. It is an eaſier thing to *believe* in *Chriſt* as our Saviour meant it, than to underſtand the *Definition of Faith*, as the *Schools* expound it. Thoſe Doctrins are moſt likely to be true, which moſt promote the Honour of the Creator and the

the Diligence of the Creature. There are many Speculative Points controverted amongſt Learned Men, of which a Man may believe either Propoſition, and yet be a very good Chriſtian. As for Inſtance. Suppoſe a Man believe the *Predeſtinarian* Doctrine, and that which moves him to it is, becauſe he judgeth Free-grace beſt celebrated by believing it ſo irreſiſtable, that to whomſoever it's intended, he will certainly be happy: Or, Suppoſe a Man queſtions thoſe Doctirnes, if this be his Reaſon, becauſe he thinks Divine Goodneſs moſt magnified by ſuppoſing it ſo Univerſal that it will make every man happy, if it be not his own fault.——See Mr. *Boyle's Seraphick Love.* pag. 104.

He that believes the *Apoſtle's Creed*, and leads his Life anſwerable thereunto, need not doubt of acceptance with Almighty God through Jeſus Chriſt. The World was never all of one mind, ſince there was but one Man in it; nor ever will be again, ſo long as there are two; eſpecially in ſuch Points which are not neceſſary to Salvation. It's a very great fault, for men to charge the Doctrines they hear, with ſuch odious Conſequences which the Preacher never intended. Suppoſe a Miniſter Preach up the neceſſity of Perſonal Righteouſneſs according to the Doctrine of the Apoſtle. 1 John 3. 7. *He that doth Righteouſneſs is Righteous*; why muſt the Hearer run away and ſay that he denied the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, when he only told them, that for men to depend upon the imputed Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, without labouring to be inwardly and really Holy, could never ſave them? Muſt not a Miniſter condemn the *Antinomian* Doctrine, but preſently all the Pariſh muſt be told, he's a Corrupt man; thereby rendring his Miniſtry ineffectual? I fear this is one of the Temptations of

the Devil, to ſteal away the Good Seed when it is ſown.

Do not all Miniſters agree in that great Truth delivered by our Saviour. *viz. He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned?* It may be you take their Doctrines to be different, meerly from a different way of expreſſing themſelves: But I would know, whether by the ſame way of excepting againſt Miniſters Doctrines as unſound, you may not alſo refuſe to hear many *Nonconformiſts*; who are called *Arminians*, *Free Willers*, and I know not what; who have been abuſed by ſome of your ſelves, when their Diſcourſes concerning *Divine Præſcience*, &c. have not been preſently underſtood? Thoſe are, certainly, the beſt Principles which regulate Mens Practices; and they are the beſt men, who live the beſt Lives, and attribute all that's Good to God, and all that's Evil to Man. Doth your Miniſter own the merit of Chriſt in the point of Juſtification, and the Spirit of Chriſt in the Work of Sanctification? Do not quarrel with his Doctrine for you know not what, ſo long as he preacheth up *Practical Chriſtianity*. Exceeding true is that Saying of Dr. *Bolton*, in his *Arraignment of Error*, viz. That *A Scrupulous Conſcience is not always a ſign of a Broken Heart, but ſometimes of a Broken Head.* Some men do not underſtand the Doctrine they hear, and then they condemn the Preacher as erronious. Be convinced that the great *Deſign of Chriſtianity* is to make men good, and where it hath not that effect, it matters not much, what Church ſuch a man is of; becauſe a Bad man can be ſaved in none. Therefore never cry out againſt Preaching up *Morality*, until you find People mend their Manners. If *Miniſters*, after the Example of St. *John Baptiſt*, call upon their *Hearers* to endeavour to Reform their Hearts and Lives, preſently

Mark 16. 16.

ſently ignorant prejudicial Hearers cry out againſt them, that they Preach upon meer *Morality*. I pray read the Learned Sermons of ſeveral Eminent Epiſcopal Divines, and you will find excellent Diſcourſes upon the *Creed* as well as upon the *Ten Commandments*. I fear we may attribute very much of our preſent Calamities to the Intricate Enthuſiaſtick Comments of many men, who left the plain way of preaching Peace and Purity, and pretended great skill in unclaſping the Sealed Book, and *caſting the Water* of the ſeven Vials, upon whomſoever they were diſpleaſed with. Perhaps there are more good Preachers, than Judicious Hearers. We have many in *England*, who think every Husbandman qualifyed to Sow the Seed of the Word. And he that can tend Sheep, is abundantly furniſhed to have the overſight of God's Flock. Such Incompetent Judges are many People, of their Miniſters Ability and Learning.

But that this pretence of the Miniſters Preaching *Arminian* Doctrine may appear but a vain Excuſe, I pray conſider: You have many Publick Preachers who never meddle with thoſe Controverſies in their Pulpits whatever their Judgments are: But they Prudently keep to Scripture Language, and, as near as may be, to the Terms, in which the Articles of our Church are expreſſed, on purpoſe to prevent that Plea for Separation. I am very confident, who ever with an Honeſt Mind attends the Publick Prayers and Sermons once a Month for a Year together, will think it his Duty to do it every *Sunday*. His vain Pretences will then vaniſh, when he finds the Prayers are ſo comprehenſive, and the Sermons ſo Practical as generally they are.

'The things Neceſſary to Salvation are (as one 'well obſerves) Plain and Few and Eaſie, not diffi-

'cult,

'cult, nor requiring much time to be Learned. As '(1) for Men to profeſs the Holy Trinity, as the 'Object of Worſhip. (2) The Holy Scriptures, as 'the Rule of Worſhip. (3) A Place of Eternal Bleſ-'ſedneſs, as the Reward of Worſhip, and (4) the 'moſt Ancient and beſt Reformed Church, as the fit-'teſt Example of Worſhip.

10Obj. *But* (ſtill goes on our Modern Separatiſt to Object) *that which, notwithſtanding all this, makes me think Communicating with your Church now more doubtful, is, Becauſe our* Nonconforming *Miniſters themſelves will not go to Church, whereas formerly they did.*

Anſw. It's very unreaſonable to make the Practice of the *Nonconforming* Miniſters a Rule to the People. For it's well known, that one Reaſon why they are no more ſeen in the Publick Churches, is, becauſe the Law permits them not to dwell within five Miles of a Corporation. So that while you are looking for them in our Publick Aſſemblies, they perhaps are retir'd into ſome obſcure Country Village. They are in danger of being impriſoned, if they ſhould be obſerved there, unleſs they have taken the *Oxford-Oath*, which very few have done.

Beſides what ſignifieth another Man's Practice as a Rule to me? The Law of God and the Law of the Land ought to be my Rule, and no Particular Examples if they contradict that. But what if ſome Rigid *Nonconformiſts* will not come at our Publick Aſſemblies? Others that are more Moderate and Peaceable will do it, and do do it, eſpecially in the Country, and before the Indulgence came forth: And they thought it their Duty to return to the Communion of the Church again, when that Liberty was prohibited by Authority. And ſo have many Private Chriſtians, who think themſelves bound in Conſcience ſo to do.

If

If Men will follow Examples, they ought to imitate those, who are most Humble and Prudent, rather than those, who are most Hot and Violent.

Hath not Mr. *Baxter*, in his *Defence of his Care*, declared to the World, 'That he himself goeth to his 'Parish-Church and takes the Sacrament Kneeling, 'on purpose to convince People that he doth not 'think it unlawful so to do? And hath not Mr. *Sam. Clark*, in his own *Life, written by himself*, declared that, 'Although he could not conform as a Minister 'in the Year 1660. Yet he durst not Separate from 'the Publick Assemblies, and gather a Church out of 'a Church, because he judged the Church of *Eng-* 'land to be a True Church? And Mr. *Pool* in his *Vox Clamantis in Deserto*, advised his *Nonconforming* Brethren, many Years ago, 'To do all the good they 'could within the Compass of the Laws, and to en- 'courage the Honest Conformists and strengthen their 'Hands.

And Mr. *Ash* observed, 'That if Men deny to hold 'Communion with such a Church as our's is, (*viz.* 'The Church of *England*) there hath not been a 'Church in the World this thousand Years with which 'a Man might lawfully Communicate.

Mr. *Gouge* that excellent Man, *who went about doing good*, and constantly attended the Publick Worship of God in the Parochial Assemblies, told his Friends, 'He thought himself bound in Conscience 'so to do: And he also caused the Prayers of the 'Church to be translated into the *Welch* Language: 'See Dr. *Tillotson's Sermon Preached at his Funeral*,

But it is likewise (I observe) *Objected by our Dissenters, that if they should not still attend the Ministry of the* Nonconforming *Ministers, They must starve for want* 11 Obj.

want of Maintenance. They are Poor and Indigent, having loſt their Livings, &c.

Anſw. A Private good, is not to be preferr'd before a *P*ublick; and it is fitter for one man to *P*eriſh, than a whole Comonm-wealth. But however, it is evident they are not all ſo *P*oor, tho' they have loſt their Livings; for many of them can ſubſiſt very comfortably without *P*reaching. And for thoſe that are *P*oor, tho' the Laws oblige you not to hear them in numerous Auditories, yet they do not forbid your Charity. You may be as kind as you pleaſe to them and their Families. If, inſtead of ſetting up Separate Congregations, they had continued in Corporations, and not refuſed to take the *Oxford-Oath*, but by their Attendance upon the *P*ublick Worſhip, and ſhewed a good Example to their former Hearers, had ſpent their time in *P*erſonal Conferencies and Inſtructions from Houſe to Houſe (the Law allowing four, beſides the Family) they had more promoted the *P*ractice of *P*ieth and encouraged many conformable *P*erſons to have been their Benefactors; by ſuch a *P*rudent and *P*eaceable Carriage, which yet I hope is not to late too begin.

Beſides, for your Miniſters to continue now their Preaching againſt Law, to procure a maintenance amongſt you, is by no Means juſtifyable, and conſequently upon that account, you ought not to hear and maintain them ſeparating from the Church Aſſemblies of *England*.

It's true, the Apoſtle ſaith. *He that provides not for his Family is worſe than an Infidel*: Yet the ſame Apoſtle obſerves, that we ought *not to do Evil, that good may come*, becauſe the *Damnation* of ſuch *is juſt*. Now tho' it be a Duty to Preach the Goſpel, yet it's not the Duty of all Men, at all Times, and in all Places,

ces. At the first Plantation of Christianity, and Publishing of the Gospel, the Apostles had an immediate Call from God, and by Virtue of that *Patent* under the *Broad Seal* of Heaven had Authority to obey God rather than Man: So that they might well say, *Wo to us if we Preach not the Gospel.* And certainly when the Conversion of Souls is the chief Motive, it would carry Men into the most Ignorant and Barbarous Parts of the World, to open mens Eyes and turn them from *Darkness* to *Light*, and from the *Power* of *Satan* unto *God*, as did the Apostles.

The Old *Nonconformists* did all the good they could in a Private Capacity, when they were silenced by the Bishops from preaching Publickly. And they thought it their Duty to submit to their Suspensions, so long as their Dioceſans did it by the Law of the Land: As Mr. *Rathband* observes *in his grave Admonitions.* (a Book written in the name of several of them.)

And so Old *Mr. Parker* challenges the World to give an Instance, if they could, of any Unpeaceableness or Obstinacy of any of them; or of any Signs of Pride or Contempt of Authority. 'Do we (saith 'he) perswade any man to refuse the Ceremonies for 'which we suffer? Do we not stretch our Consci-'ences to the utmost to conform? We do not *wil-'lingly* cast off our Ministry: But we submit to the 'Providence of God who calls us from it. See his *Book 'of the Cross*, Part 2, pag. 34.

Mr. Geree in his Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ (the design of which is to shew, that tho' there be need of *Reformation* in, yet not of *Separation* from the *Churches of Christ* in *England*) in the *Epistle* Dedicated to Learned Mr. *Richard Capel*, he saith, 'That for men 'to Preach Publickly against the Command of Au-

'thority, without an immediate Call from God, is a 'thing which he never thought excusable from *Fa-'ction*: Nor likely to be long tolerated. And he al-'so makes this Observation, That of all the spiritual 'Converts that are in our Church, it may be truly 'affirmed, that not one of ten thousand hath been 'converted by a Separatist, whilst of that Opinion; 'They more minding the proselyting of the conver-'ted to their way, than the converting of the Pro-'phane to the way of Truth. And concludes, That 'the Cure of *Separation* would further *Reformation*, as 'much as *Reformation* weakens *Separation*.

Many of the *Parliament Preachers*, in the Late Times, we find frequently calling upon them to suppress *Divisions in Religion*, by their Civil Authority; as being the Keepers of *Both* Tables: And they tell them, 'The Omission of their Duty in that Particu-'lar would render them accessory thereunto. See Mr. '*Marshall*'s Sermon and others.

Dr. *Seaman* tells the Parliament that the Power of Magistrates in Matters of Religion is now struck at. And, saith he, 'Besides the Prophane and Scandalous 'Ministers, there are a new sort arisen amongst us, 'who thrust themselves into the Lord's Vineyard, 'and it's no less than Persecution (so they common-'ly give out (to Desire to have their Suspicious Opi-'nions examined, and *they* commanded to forbear 'Publishing them. See his *Sermon* called *the President for Kings and Princes*.

Thanks be to God, our *Magistrates* do not forbid the *Preaching* of the *Gospel*, nor the practising of that excellent *Part* of it, *the relieving of the Indigent*: They only restrain some particular *Persons*, whose *Principles* will not permit them to submit to the *Publick Constitutions*, from *Preaching*, but not from sub-

ſubſiſting by your Benevolence. You may maintain them, I hope, without ſeparating from Communion with us to hear them *Preach*, We having ſo many and ſo good *Men* of unſpotted Lives, who *Preach* ſound Doctrine, and are incouraged thereto by our Laws.

But now the concluding Objection of all, which our Diſſenters urge the moſt vehemently againſt their Communion with our Church, is this:

There hath (ſay they) *been ſo many Books written of late in Defence of* Nonconformity, *that I cannot be ſatisfy'd; but ſtill remain in Doubt, Whether it be lawful to hold Communion with the* Parochial Aſſemblies: *I vehemently ſuſpect it to be ſinful, and* whatſoever is not of Faith is Sin, *and therefore there's an end of the Controverſie.* 12 Obj.

There's not an End of the Controverſie for all that. I pray examine firſt, whether you do not make uſe of this Plea merely for a pretence: And in order to your own Tryal, I'll refer you to one of your own admired Miniſters, for Directions how you may know the difference between Wilfulneſs and Tenderneſs of Conſcience. It is Mr. *Jer. Burroughs*, in his *Irenicum*, pag. 36, & 37. 'If a man (ſays he) be proud and turbulent 'in his Carriage, and deſpiſe his Betters, and be apt 'to publiſh his miſtakes, and not humbly and modeſt-'ly conceal them; It's then a ſign the Devil is in his 'Will, and not in his Conſcience, when a man oppo-'ſeth the Judgments of many more Godly and Learn-'ed than himſelf; and when he neglects the means of 'better Information, not ſtudying what may be ſaid 'againſt his Opinion as well as what may be ſaid 'for it. *Anſw.*

The Reverend *Mr. Bernard*, in his *Counſels of Peace*, hath given excellent Rules in Caſe of a doubting

ting Conſcience, and they are theſe very obſervable ones which follow. 'Be ſure to maintain and uphold 'all that is manifeſtly good in Church or State. If 'there be manifeſt Evils, Labour in your Place, by 'the beſt means to have them amended in a peaceable way; and bear with lighter faults, for a time, 'until a fitter occaſion be offered to redreſs them. As 'for likelyhoods of Evil, make them not apparent 'Evil by ill Interpretation, where neither the State 'intends it nor maintains it. Take doubtful things 'ever in the beſt part. Judiciouſly diſtinguiſh between the abuſe of a thing, and the uſe of it. Make 'a difference between *P*ublick Eſtabliſhments, and '*P*erſonal Errors of ſome: Between Subſtance, and 'Circumſtance: Between ſound Doctrine, and bad 'Application. Again, never preſume to Reform 'others until thou haſt Reformed thy ſelf. Do not 'diſobey the evident Command of God, where there 'is nothing but probability of ſinning in obeying the 'Precept of thy Governour. Do not ſet Opinion 'before Judgment. Set aſide Fancy, and do not refuſe to obey Authority, where it is not plain that 'you Sin againſt God in ſo doing. Be more afraid 'of offending a Lawful *M*agiſtrate, than many private *P*erſons. Where thou canſt not yield, there 'humbly beg pardon: Where thou canſt not be tolerated, be contented with Correction for ſafety of 'Conſcience: It's not enough, to excuſe Obedience, 'to ſay it ſeems to me to be a Sin. I pray how doth 'it appear to be ſo? Is it *ſimply* ſo? Shew me the '*Prohibition*: Or is it *Accidentally* ſo? Only in the '*abuſe* of it, or through *Ignorance* of its Lawfulneſs? 'Or doſt thou only *Conjecture* it to be ſo? Conſider, 'none of theſe things can Diſcharge from the neglect 'of a known Duty, as Obedience to Authority is.

The Rational and Excellently Learned Caſuiſt, *Biſhop Sanderſon*, in his *Sermon upon* that Text, *whatſoever is not of Faith is Sin*, tells us to this purpoſe, that from hence ſome men take Occaſion to tell us, that they cannot go againſt their own Conſcience, for any *Magiſtrates* pleaſure whatſoever. Rom. 14. 23.

'Judg I pray 'you (ſaith he) what preverſeneſs is this, when the 'Bleſſed Apoſtle commandeth us to *Obey for Conſcience* 'ſake, that *Men* ſhould *diſobey*, and that for *Conſcience* 'ſake too. Thou ſayeſt, It is againſt thy Conſcience. 'I ſay in the Caſe of doubtfulneſs, it is not againſt 'thy Conſcience. For doubting properly is, when 'the *Mind* is held in ſuſpence between two ways: 'Uncertain whether of both to take. And in this 'Caſe the weight of Authority ſhould caſt the Scale: 'A repugnant Conſcience, I confeſs, is another thing. 'If the Conſcience have already paſſed a Judgment 'upon a thing, and condemned it as ſimply Unlaw-'ful; In that caſe a man ought not to obey, although 'his Conſcience hath pronounced a wrong Sentence; 'and erred in that Judgment: Yet he ſins in diſobey-'ing the *Magiſtrate*; from which Sin the following 'of the Judgment of his own Conſcience cannot ac-'quit him. Such is the *Perplexity* men caſt them-'ſelves into by Error, Ignorance and Obſtinacy, that 'they can neither go with their Conſciences, nor a-'gainſt them, but they ſhall Sin. But you will yet 'ſay, It's ſafer to forbear in a doubtful Caſe; I ſay ſo 'too: Only let the Caſe be rightly ſtated. As for Ex-'ample: Suppoſe a man doubt whether it be Law-'ful to Kneel at the Communion, thou thinkeſt it ſa-'fer for thee perhaps not to kneel. So ſhould I too, 'If thou wert left meerly to thine own Liberty. But 'if Authority Command thee to kneel, which whe-'ther it be Lawful for thee to do, or not, thou doubt-

'eſt;

'eſt; thou cannot chuſe but thou muſt needs doubt 'alſo, whether thou mayeſt lawfully diſobey or not. 'Now then here apply the Rule (of taking the ſafer 'way in a doubtful Caſe) and ſee what will come of 'it. Judg, ſince thou canſt not but doubt in both 'Caſes, whether it be not the ſafer of the two, to o-'bey doubtingly, than to diſobey doubtingly. Hold 'to the certainty, and let the uncertain go. It's cer-'tain, thou ought to obey the Magiſtrate in things 'not contrary to the Will of God; but whether the 'thing now commanded is contrary to the Will of 'God is uncertain to thee, becauſe thou doubteſt. 'Act ſafely, therefore, and obey.

And the Reverend Mr. *Paul Baines* tells us, in the Letter he wrote to his Friend to reſolve the doubt concerning kneeling at the Sacrament. 'If (ſays he) 'twenty Scruples ſhould ariſe in my mind about it, I 'ſhould yet believe the Geſture Lawful, for the Rea-'ſons before named, which you may ſee in his Book 'at large.

Mr. Baxter, likewiſe, very well obſerves in his *Reaſons for the Chriſtian Religion* that, 'A tender Con-'ſcience is as tender of being Guilty of Diviſions, 'Schiſme, and Separation, as of Drunkenneſs, Whore-'dome or any other Enormous Sins.

So that you may, by this time I doubt not, ſee hence enough to convince you of the inſufficiency of this mighty Objection to excuſe your Separation from the Parochial Aſſemblies of our Church.

Let not therefore the Pretence of greater Purity, deſtroy Unity; Nor the *tything of Mint, Aniſe and Cummin*, make us *neglect the greater* and more weighty *Matters of the Law*. Let us Labour after thoſe Divine Qualifications which give the Eſſential Forme, and Genuine Complexion to Chriſtianity, ſuch as Love and

and Goodneſs, Truth and *Mercy*, Peace and Holineſs: And ſhun thoſe malignant Epidemical Diſtempers which wound the Vitals of Religion, ſuch as Anger, Wrath, Clamour, Rebellion, Faction and Sedition, *&c.* And let us remember that all the parts of Inſtituted Worſhip, are but deſigned to bring the Mind and *Manners* of men into a nearer Correſpondence with the Divine likeneſs; and more exact Reſemblance of that *Pure* and Holy Being who is the Object of our Worſhip: Veſture, Geſture, Time and *Place*, Forms of Devotion and *Modes* of Expreſſion being but the Appendages of Religion, and therefore unbecoming wiſe and good *Men* to diſturb the Peace of the Church about them, if they do not in all things ſuit with their private Humours. Let us wiſely therefore (to conclude) obſerve the Apoſtles moſt excellent Directions. *With all Lowlyneſs and Meekneſs, with long ſuffering forbearing one another in Love. Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the* Bond *of Peace.* Epheſ. 4, 2. 3.

F I N I S.